

ANNAMITE CIVILIZATION

Conquest of the three Cochin-Chinese provinces and the payment of a money indemnity. This did not, however, end the matter, for the continued success of the revolts he stirred up encouraged Tu-Duc to send an embassy to Paris offering to buy back his lost possessions.

The fate of Cochin-China hung on such a slender thread that if Tu-Duc had been more swiftly conciliatory, and if Chasseloup-Laubat, then Minister of the Navy, had been less strong in insisting upon the retention of the new conquest, Lido-China might not to-day be a French colony.

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF ANNAM

The Emperor is the absolute sovereign of—politically—the most democratic of peoples. He is the pivot around which the administrative machinery rotates—in modern times very creakHy. Legend rektes him to the Emperor of CMna, of whom he is at least spiritually the descendant. The fact that succession to the throne is not invariably fixed by primogeniture has fomented innumerable palace revolutions. Only royal blood is essential and a ceremony by which the reigning sovereign designates his successor.

It is the Emperor's religious character that makes his power absolute and any disobedience to it a sacrilege. The mark of his supreme authority is his exclusive right to make the Sacrifice to Heaven: he calls himself the Son of Heaven, not in arrogance as it sounds to Western ears, but in token of filial submission. The imperial will is, therefore, above law, of which it is the fountain-head and by which it is subsequently safeguarded. Respect for authority is a fundamental concept in Sino-Annamite belief. There is no contractual element in this imperial absolutism, indicating that it originally

emanated from popular consent, but it is regarded as a mandatory delegation of power from the supreme celestial authority. The Annamites, ever copying the Chinese, have surrounded their sovereign with mystery and divinity. The emperor, quasi-divine, formerly remained hidden in his palace—an inviolable sanctuary. Ceremonials in which he figured were regulated to the minutest detail. His real name might never be pronounced. Responsible only to Heaven, he is on earth the living symbol of his people's unity.

Confucianist principles so inculcate filial piety that even the Emperor must listen respectfully to his mother's advice, Tu-Duc, powerful as he was, never dared tell his mother of the loss of Cochinchina, Bui